

Message Text

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ORIGIN OES-07

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SUBJECT: ICCAT TUNA REGULATIONS

1. PLEASE PASS FOLLOWING IN FORM OF DIPLOMATIC NOTE TO
GOJ: BEGIN TEXT (COMPLIMENTARY OPENING)... AND HAS THE
HONOR TO BRING TO THE ATTENTION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN
THE CONCERN OF THE UNITED STATES OVER THE STATUS OF THE
ATLANTIC BLUEFIN TUNA STOCKS. IN THIS REGARD, THE UNITED
STATES TAKES NOTE OF THE PATTERN OF CATCHES IN RECENT
YEARS BY JAPANESE TUNA LONGLINE VESSELS. THE CATCHES OF
BLUEFIN TUNA BY THESE VESSELS IN THE GULF OF MEXICO
INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY FROM A CATCH IN 1974 OF 1,300 TUNA
TO 6,445 TUNA IN 1975 AND TO 9,800 BLUEFIN TUNA IN 1976.
THE CATCH IN 1977 APPROXIMATED THAT OF 1976. THIS EXPANDED
EFFORT IS A CAUSE OF CONCERN IN THE UNITED STATES SINCE THE
CATCHES ARE BEING MADE ON THE MAIN SPAWNING STOCK OF
LARGE GIANT BLUEFIN IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO AND DURING THE
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BREEDING SEASON.

IN THE VIEW OF THE UNITED STATES, THE EXTENT AND CONCENTRA-
TION OF THIS FISHING EFFORT, RATHER THAN A MORE DIFFUSE
EFFORT AND CATCH THROUGHOUT A LARGER GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF THE
ATLANTIC INVOLVING MORE AREAS OF LEESER IMPORTANCE AS
BREEDING AREAS, HAMPERS INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO RESTORE

THE BIOLOGICAL BALANCE AND LONGTERM STABILITY OF THE RESOURCE. IN ADDITION SUCH FISHING PATTERNS APPEAR TO BE CONTRARY TO THE CONSERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ATLANTIC BLUEFIN TUNA ESTABLISHED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT).

THE UNITED STATES IS ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THE INCREASED CATCH OF SMALLER BLUEFIN TUNA BY LONGLINE VESSELS IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN ADJACENT TO THE UNITED STATES, (AREA APPROXIMATELY ENCOMPASSED BY 36 TO 42 NORTH LATITUDE AND 70 TO 75 WEST LONGITUDE.) A RESEARCH REPORT RECENTLY SUBMITTED BY JAPANESE SCIENTISTS TO THE ICCAT INDICATES THAT LARGE NUMBERS OF BLUEFIN OF THE 1973 AGE GROUP WERE TAKEN BY THESE VESSELS EARLY IN 1977.

SIMILAR REPORTS FOR PREVIOUS YEARS INDICATE THAT LONGLINE CATCHES IN THIS AREA HAVE COMMONLY CONSISTED OF SMALLER NUMBERS OF OLDER BLUEFIN. THE CHANGE IN SIZE AND NUMBERS OF THE LONGLINE CATCH THIS YEAR INDICATES INCREASES IN EFFORT AND POSSIBLY A SHIFT IN LOCATION OF FISHING ACTIVITIES. THE 1973 AND SUBSEQUENT AGE GROUPS ARE NOW MORE ABUNDANT IN THIS AREA LARGELY BECAUSE OF SEVERE CATCH RESTRICTIONS PLACED ON U.S. FISHERMEN TO ACCOMPLISH THE CONSERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS OF ICCAT. PREVIOUSLY, THESE FISHERMEN WOULD HAVE HARVESTED LARGE NUMBERS OF THESE AGE GROUPS IN THE SECOND, THIRD, AND FOURTH YEARS OF UNCLASSIFIED

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LIFE.

IF THE BLUEFIN THAT HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO ESCAPE FROM THE U.S. FISHERY BECAUSE OF SEVERE CATCH RESTRICTIONS ARE TO BE TAKEN BY JAPANESE LONGLINE VESSELS, THE EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE CONDITION OF THE BLUEFIN TUNA STOCK WILL HAVE BEEN FUTILE. THEREFORE, THE UNITED STATES URGES JAPAN TO FULLY COMPLY WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE ICCAT RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING ATLANTIC BLUEFIN TUNA BY DEMONSTRATING THE RESTRAINT NECESSARY TO RESTORE THE ATLANTIC BLUEFIN TUNA STOCK TO A HEALTHY CONDITION AND TO ASSURE FUTURE HARVESTS (COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE). END TEXT. VANCE

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